Lord of the Flies
The Darkness of Human Nature
A Context of Fear:

- Golding sets the book in a post-apocalyptic setting--there has just been an atomic bomb.
- Plane crash--full of boys (evacuees from the war)--on a deserted island
- No adults, no rules, no order, no food, no shelter
- Golding’s setting reflects the pervasive and irrational FEAR felt during the Cold War era--the reminders of atomic bombs were everywhere.
  - Fallout shelters (sign, handbook)
  - Duck and Cover drills (“Bert the Turtle”)
  - Civil Defense and Public Service Videos (Video 2)
The Popularity of Dystopian Texts

- 1950s--The original readers did not like *Lord of the Flies*--went out of print almost immediately.
- 1960s--LOF was required reading in many high schools and colleges
- Mid- 1990s--LOF named by American Library Association as one of most challenged books taught in schools.
- 2005--LOF named one of the best English novels of the 20th century by TIME magazine.
- 2016--**Dystopias** are one of the most popular genres in Young Adult Literature (*Hunger Games, Catching Fire, Divergent, Matched, Delirium*, etc.)

*Questions: Why do readers love dystopias? What does the genre provide for the reader? Why was LOF unpopular with original readers?*
Themes/Thematic Questions

- Power over reason/logic
- Instinct over intellect
- Chaos vs. control
- Survival
- The individual vs. society
- The darkness/savagery in human nature
- The loss of innocence

- Who is “civilized”? 
- Who is “savage”? 
- Are humans inherently good or evil?
- What is good leadership?
- What are the effects of being a bystander?
Archetypes/Symbols

- The Christ figure/martyr figure
- Fire
- Light and dark
- Water
- The Fall
- The Outcast
- The Scapegoat
- The Villain
- The Initiation (Bildüngsroman?)
- The Forest
- The Blind Prophet
- Loss of Innocence

- Glasses
- Conch
- The island (microcosm vs. macrocosm)
- The scar
- The beast
- The dead parachutist
- Heat
- Nudity
- Colors
- The Lord of the Flies (the pig)
- Ralph, Piggy, Jack, Simon, and Roger*

*Is there a hero in this novel?

*LOF is an allegorical novel. Think about the multiple allegories at work in the text.
Characters

- Ralph
- Piggy
- Jack
- Roger
- Simon
- Sam n’ Eric
- The littluns/the choirboys

Are these characters symbolic?
Consider how the boys are split up.
Are these archetypal characters?
Do these characters represent allegorical layers to the text?
Structure

- Ch. 1-2: Utopia (paradise?)
- Ch. 3-7: Dystopia (reality)
- Ch. 8-end: True Human Nature Revealed

Subplots:
- Simon’s secret sojourns into the woods
- The dead pilot
- Piggy’s need for acceptance
- The fight for “political” power
- Survivors of the atomic bomb? (Ralph’s father?)